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## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### INFORMATION SERVICE

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#### FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release to the PM's OF WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 1946.

Interstate cooperation on an extensive scale is necessary if the fisheries of the Middle Atlantic region are to be conserved and fully developed as a source of wealth, according to a report published today by the United States Department of the Interior in its Conservation Bulletin series.

Because most of the fishes that support the region's fifteen-million-dollar fisheries are highly migratory, the various parts of the region are dependent on each other to an unusual degree for maintaining the populations of fishes and other marine life, according to the bulletin.

As examples, it was pointed out that the same stock of croakers or flounders is caught by the fishermen of different states at different seasons of the year, and that the striped bass spawned in the Chesapeake Bay provide most of the fishing for this species, not only in the Chesapeake, but also farther north along the Atlantic coast.

Entitled "Fish and Shellfish of the Middle Atlantic Coast," the publication was written by Rachel L. Carson, aquatic biologist on the staff of the Fish and Wildlife Service, and is illustrated with maps, charts, and drawings of the various fishes by Katherine L. Howe. It is the fourth in a regional series of bulletins by the same author dealing with the fisheries of the United States.

The average prewar yield of the fisheries from New York to Virginia was about 676 million pounds, which brought fishermen an income of approximately 15 million dollars. The value of the fisheries during the war years was somewhat greater.

The Middle Atlantic fisheries, unlike those of New England or the Pacific coast, are carried on largely by individual fishermen or small associations of fishermen. About 22,000 men are engaged fishing in this area.

The most characteristic fishes of the region are a group of 60 or more species collectively known as shore fishes, whose seasonal migrations largely determine the character of the fisheries. The shorefishes, including flounders, sea trouts, croakers, and sea bass, move inshore and northward in spring, offshore and south in autumn. Although their wintering grounds formerly were unknown, for about the past fifteen years vessels have been following them offshore, and extensive winter fishing is now carried on along the outer part of the continental shelf,

The most valuable fishery resource of the region is the oyster, of which the Middle Atlantic states produce more than half the U. S. crop. The area also provides about two-thirds of the catch of Atlantic coast crabs, more than half the total catch of menhaden, and most of the shad and river herring.

The shellfish resources, according to the bulletin, are suffering from lack of management by modern scientific methods which would improve both the quality and quantity of oysters and clams produced. Although recent progress has been made in some areas toward the development of a system of state-managed cultivation, the laws of most states of the region prevent the adoption of modern methods of cultivation.

The shad and herring fisheries are described as needing strong positive action if they are to be saved from further depletion. Pollution has ruined the Delaware River as a spawning place for shad; until the river is cleaned up, there is little hope of rebuilding the runs. In some of the rivers, dams are impassible barriers to migrating fish. As yet, no fishways satisfactory for shad and herring have been devised for Atlantic coast streams.

Copies of "Fish and Shellfish of the Middle Atlantic Coast," designated as Conservation Bulletin 38, may be obtained from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C. for 10 cents each, or from members of Congress on request.